

# Communicator

Mahoning County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities  
Spring 2009

## Tim Gilboy Extinguishes Potentially Disastrous Fire



Quick, courageous work by Tim Gilboy, Supported Employment, averted what could have been a disastrous fire at Rockne's restaurant where he has worked for nine years. He was recognized for fast action in the face of a potentially disastrous fire that started in a restroom. He quickly extinguished the fire and called for help. His advice, "Don't play with matches!" The Mahoning County Board of MRDD presented Tim with a special recognition award in honor of his actions.

## Judge D'Apolito Passes the Torch

At the November meeting, Board attorney Lou D'Apolito, recently elected a Mahoning County Common Pleas judge, passed the torch to Attorney Chris Sammarone after fifteen years of service.

D'Apolito was elected in November 2008 to an unexpired term ending December 31, 2012. Judge D'Apolito replaces Judge Timothy E. Franken who retired. Judge D'Apolito took the bench December 1, 2008. He worked with Mahoning MRDD for 15 years. Board President, Joseph Ignazio, praised him for being "Conscientious, knowledgeable of local government, generous with his time and support and able to mediate difficult controversies." Board vice president Dawn Burton presented him with a Perske print in recognition of his years of service.



**Former MCBMRDD Board Attorney Lou D'Apolito is sworn in as Common Pleas Judge.**

## New Officers



**The Mahoning County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities has elected a slate of officers left to right; Vice President - Dawn Burton, President - Joseph Ignazio, (Superintendent - Larry Duck), Recording Secretary - Dominic Medina.**

## New Board Members



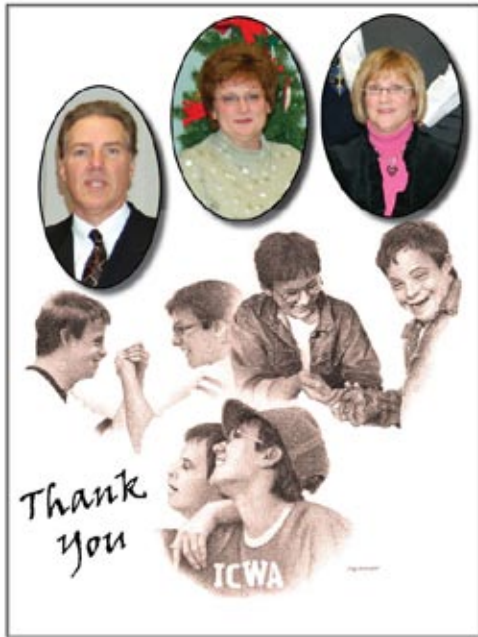
**The Board welcomed three new members during the January Board meeting. Left to right; Commissioner John McNally IV, Anthony Sertick, Henrietta Lewis, Commissioner Anthony Traficanti and Lewis "Tim" Wolfgang. Sertick, Lewis and Wolfgang were sworn in by the appointing Mahoning County Commissioners.**

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Open Monday through Friday  
8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

[www.mahoningmrdd.org](http://www.mahoningmrdd.org)



## Outgoing Board Members Honored

Board president Joseph Ignazio honored Carole Weimer, Sandee Timmerman and Frank Santisi for their years of service to the Mahoning County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. "Their work will benefit generations to come," he noted. "They have kept the program strong during difficult times. The Board is standing on a firm foundation thanks to their efforts. Their caring attitude and vigilance will always be appreciated." Each was presented with a Perske print.



## Board Business

### Meredith Weimer Remembered

At its February meeting, the Board extended heartfelt sympathy to the Weimer family on the loss of their daughter Meredith. The family asked that donations be made to Relay for Life in lieu of flowers.

### Superintendent's contract extended

In executive session, the Board adopted a motion to extend Superintendent Larry Duck's contract for three more years with an increase in pay not to exceed 2% per year based on performance and subject to financial circumstances.

### Waiver Specialist Position Created to Reduce Outside Costs

The board approved a motion to create a waiver specialist position to manage 232 IO waivers and 102 Level 1 waivers. These waivers are currently managed under contract with NEON and by bringing the position inside, the board expects to save as much as \$140,000 per year.

### Police training

Individuals with mental retardation can pose sensitive issues for law enforcement. Without adequate training, police officers may have difficulty recognizing mental retardation and interacting appropriately with the individual. In order to address this challenge, Dick Ranshaw and George Gabriel have provided training to local police departments twice a year for the past three years.

Law enforcement officers universally find the training helpful and appreciate the addition to their professional skills.



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# Impact of State Budget and Stimulus Money Remains Uncertain

Governor Ted Strickland announced in February 2009 that Ohio will receive at least \$8.2 billion in federal funds as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). It's a substantial investment, but one that could have mixed results, according to Superintendent Larry Duck. In addition,

the state budget now being debated in Columbus does not resolve long-term funding issues for Boards of MRDD.

For example, phasing out of the tangible personal property tax will adversely impact MRDD programs along with firefighters, school districts, CSB and other county services.

In addition, although the stimulus money will replace part of the \$650,000 reduction in state support, after the stimulus expires, Mahoning MRDD will eventually experience \$1.5 million in reductions, requiring significant downsizing to live within anticipated 2012 revenue.

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## Summer Enrichment Program a Collaborative Effort

Elaine Gamberale, Program Coordinator, reported on the success of the 2008 Summer Enrichment Program held. One hundred ten students ages 3 to 22 from across Mahoning County participated in the program. Occupational, physical and speech therapy, personal augmentation devices and transportation were among the services provided.

Fun was a big part of the program as well. ISLE provided recreational services, including fishing, outdoor activities, bowling and a summer festival. Participants enjoyed a free breakfast and lunch each day from the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Safety, Health and Nutrition.

Eight different organizations contributed services or support for the program, according to Gamberale. The majority of the funding came from the Mahoning County Board of MRDD (approximately \$70,000) and \$50,000 in funding for camp tuition came from local public school districts for extended school year services.

Youngstown State University student teachers worked with the students and gained field experience in special education and physical therapy.

MCESC coordinated the effort and furnished staffing, supervision, therapy and educational experiences. State Support Team,



Region 5 provided instructional kits and specialized materials.

At the end of the session, 250 students and family members enjoyed a celebration picnic. Each student received a participation award and families experienced the summer activities through a slide show. Thirty-seven parents completed a survey to help identify program adjustments for the 2009 session.

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## Governor Strickland Supports Name Change for Boards of MRDD

In his MRDD Awareness Month address, Governor Ted Strickland supported the movement to delete the words "mental retardation" from the name of the Ohio Department of MRDD and county boards of MRDD across the state.

"Respectful words are important," the Governor stated. "That is why I am announcing today that I support having the Ohio Department of MRDD's name changed to remove the words 'mental retardation.' I am asking ODMRDD Director John Martin to work with Senator Jimmy Stewart and other legislators, and with the County Boards Association and others, to see if this can be accomplished this year, while minimizing any expense associated with the change."

While supporting the concept, Superintendent Larry Duck noted that it could cost some Boards as much as \$500,000 to revise signage, stationery and other items. He also expressed concern that individuals with moderate developmental delays would expect to receive services they were not entitled to as a result of the change. He expressed the hope that the effort and cost could be spread over five years rather than just one.



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## Help Hotline recognizes MCBMRDD

The Help Hotline Crisis Center voted to recognize MCBMRDD for exceptionally responsive service – even in the middle of the night – according to Kris Hodge, Assistant Superintendent.

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## Staff members attend Executive Development Program in Columbus

Superintendent Larry Duck recognized staff for ongoing training participation. George Gabriel, Workshop Director, Meshel MASCO and Paul Iden Communications and Development Coordinator, attended Intensive training sessions in Columbus on Managing Organization Conflict.

Kris Hodge, Maria Volpe and Jim Groner attended seminars in prior years.

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## SSA Department Distributes Christmas Gifts to Record Number of Needy Families

The SSA Department coordinated holiday gift giving to 45 families in need. Maria Volpe, SSA supervisor reported that this was a record number, due to the economic challenges currently facing families. Each family received gifts totaling \$50.

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### Gifts were funded by:

**The Difference Makers** - \$1000 in Target gift cards.

**St. Charles St. Vincent De Paul Society** - \$600 in Giant Eagle and Wal-Mart gift cards

**Denise DeBartolo York** - \$500 to purchase gift cards

**St. Charles Cheerleaders** - gifts for eighteen children

# What a difference a day of caring makes

When more than 16 staff members of MCBMRDD converged on a dilapidated home during the Community Services Day of Caring, they found broken windows, a dangerous electrical system, an overgrown yard, a dearth of furniture and a hard-working woman grateful for a little help.

Without a car, the homeowner had to catch a bus to take her freshly-washed clothes to the Laundromat to dry them. According to assistant superintendent Kris Hodge, Denise DeBartolo York donated a dryer – solving that problem. The husband of an MRDD staff member re-wired

the home. Aarons furniture donated a mattress. Everybody dug into the necessary yard work.

Others donated food and money for medications. To be sure that the homeowner's needs were met over the longer term, board member Angelo Pignatelli initiated a giving fund.

For the homeowner, it was like Christmas. For Mahoning MRDD staff, it was even better. "We got tired, we got dirty, but we got more out of the day than the homeowner did," Hodge concluded.



*From left to right; Sue Hart, Candice Jones, Janine Wlodarsky and Sue Lance.*

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## **Mahoning County Board of MRDD to sponsor ARC of Ohio Family Advocacy Conference May 29, 2009**

**Location: Holiday Inn, Boardman, Ohio**

**Registration deadline: May 21, 2009**

A conference designed to help parents, siblings, and caregivers of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities plan for the future will be hosted by ARC of Ohio at the Holiday Inn in Boardman on May 29. The program will include an overview of the effect of stimulus funding on MRDD services.

This event provides families with an opportunity to meet others in similar circumstances, as well as gathering information from participating care providers and other service agencies. Counselors, social workers, MRDD staff and other professionals will gain a better understanding of Special Needs Trusts, Guardianship, the Autism Scholarship Program and how to utilize these services when working with special needs individuals and their families.

MRDD professionals can receive continuing education credits for attending. Sponsored by MCBMRDD and co-sponsored by Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc., the seminar is approved by the State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker Board for **6 contact hours**. Help Hotline Crisis Center, Inc. is approved to provide counselor and social worker continuing education credits. (RCS-019401) The program is approved by the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities for **6 CPE's**.

The cost for families, parents, caregivers and siblings is \$25 per person. The cost for professional staff is \$40 per person. Deadline for registration is May 21, 2009.

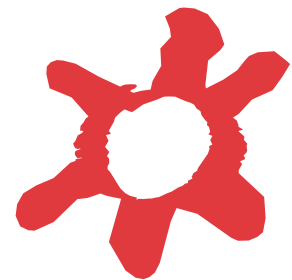
**For further details, contact:**

The Arc of Ohio Northeast Branch  
3024 Center Rd. (Rt.224)  
Poland, Ohio 44514

**Ph:** (330) 707-1134

**Fax:** (330) 707-1422

**Email:** arcohne@att.net



## **Welcome New Staff**



**Vince Paolucci**  
Service and Support  
Supervisor



**Mary Ann McFarland**  
Educational Assistant



**Dawn Hartzell**  
Service and Support  
Administrator



**Caroline Brown**  
Service and Support  
Administrator



**Frank Dietz**  
Maintenance  
Coordinator



**Ryan Gerek**  
Service Supervisor/  
Waiver Coordinator

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## **Board Requests Stimulus funds**

The Mahoning County Board of MRDD has an operating budget of approximately \$24 million per year. All annual budgets are based on the principle of no deficit spending. Superintendent Larry Duck emphasized that the Board budgets responsibly. "We do not exaggerate revenue estimates in order to justify spending a larger amount on operating expenses, and we do not balance our operating budget by drawing funds out of carryover in the General Fund account. This is the only prudent way to budget, but it does force the Board to reduce its budget year to year if revenues are declining."

Duck reported that the Board has turned in requests for funding from the Stimulus Package for \$157,000 in capital improvement projects. This represents the cost of all renovations and improvements identified in the 2009 budget. However, the effect of the Stimulus Package on the MCBMRDD budget is still unclear. The state budget is still being worked out and debated and will not be approved until June 20.



# Special



# Recognition



**Harriet Keyser, Meshe MASCO, has exhibited an exciting turnaround in goals and attitude.**



**Leonard Rankin is practically synonymous with Meshe MASCO. He attends consistently, and is always even-tempered. His niece, Melissa noted that "He has the best jokes, the best memory. It was a joy growing up with him."**



**Shirley Starling began attending the Centre @ Javit last March. She loves music and is a joy to be around.**



**Matt Hynes has moved over to the Centre @ Javit following supported employment with Goodwill Industries. He has a wonderful work ethic, is punctual and accepts change. He has a passion for bowling.**



**Larry Williams, Bev MASCO lost his mother recently, but is adjusting well and has been doing a tremendous job.**



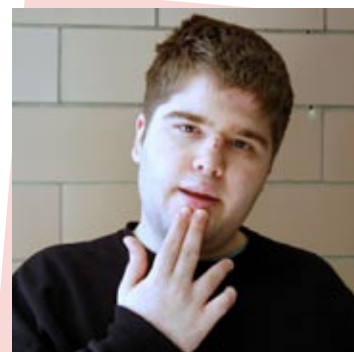
**Brian McFarland, Leonard Kirtz School, is the #1 Steelers fan, but more important he has shown steady progress toward his vocational goals and helps out by distributing supplies. He is gaining confidence with people he doesn't know.**



**Justin Sprague has been attending Leonard Kirtz School for the past two years and has made a great deal of progress. He collects materials for recycling and cleans lunch trays. In his leisure time, he bikes and shoots hoops.**



**Phyllis Augustine, participates part-time at Bev MASCO and part-time at the Centre @ Javit where she enjoys the outings and displaying her crafts at the Canfield Fair.**



**Jeff Schnarrenberger's parents are to be congratulated. He is an independent worker and does a great job at Bev MASCO.**



**Christopher Joyce, Bev MASCO, was recognized for his outstanding job on the production floor. He enjoys computers and is always friendly and helpful.**



**Gabby Agresta, Bev MASCO, has been doing a great job with her academic programs and work skills. She also enjoys reading to others.**



**Jackie Hoover, Bev MASCO, has attended the facility regularly since October of '07. Highly creative, she crafted coasters for each staff member. She is a wonderful listener and applies herself to everything she needs to do and is much loved.**



**Melinda Mandel, Centre @ Javit, had worked at Pine Industries before coming to the Centre in April of '08. She enjoys the Centre and has been a great addition.**



**Gregory Vargo, Centre @ Javit, loves music and dancing and has a way with words. He is an inspiration to the staff.**



**Steve Reese, Meshel MASCO, was nominated for his consistent attendance, his pleasant personality, and his remarkable flexibility with completing tasks asked of him.**

**Phyllis Cizmar, Meshel MASCO, is a willing and eager worker. After being laid off from a job in the community, she has returned to Meshel MASCO.**

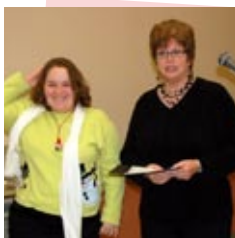


**Thomas Kutty, Meshel MASCO, is a hard and productive worker who lightens the workday with his extensive knowledge of country songs and artists. He recently changed work groups and shifts without a problem.**



**Michael Custer, Leonard Kirtz School, transferred to Leonard Kirtz School in the fall. He has adjusted well to his new situation and is making great strides and many friends.**

**Julie See, Leonard Kirtz School, Julie is the "Good Will Ambassador" of LKS offering a warm welcome to visitors. She takes her duties as a client aide very seriously and aims to please others as she helps the students, teachers and aides in Wing 1.**



**Amber Hacon, Leonard Kirtz School, was nominated by the Occupational Therapy Department for her growing independence. She does a great job in the greenhouse and is successfully overcoming her dislike of dirt. She is a self-starter who needs little direction.**



#### **MASCO employees receive Frances Sittwell Soloman Award**

**The Frances Sittwell Soloman Award was established to "encourage acts of good will." This year, it was presented to employees who worked hard and long to collect \$1100 for the Penny the Pig Campaign. That accomplishment brings the total collected over the years to more than \$8,000 – that's more than 800,000 pennies!**

## Have a Question about MCBMRDD Programs?

If you would like more information on the Mahoning County Board of MRDD's programs, policies, facilities, hours of operation, addresses, telephone numbers, or if you would like clarification of something you heard about the MCBMRDD, please contact Paul Iden at 4791 Woodridge Drive, Austintown, Ohio 44515 or by telephone at 330-797-3051 or by e-mail to [piden@zoominternet.net](mailto:piden@zoominternet.net)

### GOT NEWS?

Pass information to Paul Iden. E-mail: [piden@zoominternet.net](mailto:piden@zoominternet.net)  
330-797-3051

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*Mahoning County Board of Mental Retardation  
and Developmental Disabilities*

4791 Woodridge Drive • Austintown, Ohio 44515-5100

## Board Members

**Joseph Ignazio** President

**Dawn Burton** Vice President

**Dominic Medina** Recording Secretary

**Henrietta Lewis**

**Angelo Pignatelli**

**Anthony Sertick**

**Lewis "Tim" Wolfgang**

## Superintendent

**Larry Duck**

## Mahoning County Commissioners

**David N. Ludt**

**John A. McNally IV**

**Anthony T. Traficanti**

## Mahoning County Probate Court Judge

**The Honorable  
Judge Mark A. Belinky**

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